# MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

*Presented by*

*The James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation*
*for Public School and Children's Lectures*

Series XVII, Number 1
September 26, 1931

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

## GAMES AND TOYS OF INDIAN CHILDREN

Indian boys and girls have always liked to play just as much as you do. Like most children, they were especially fond of games in which they imitated the work of their fathers and mothers.

Many tribes secured most of their food by hunting wild animals. In the old days, little boys always had their own bows and arrows, made by their fathers or grandfathers. They were not allowed to have sharp arrows until they had learned to shoot straight, that they might not hurt other people. They often shot at marks, and spent much time hunting small animals.

In Labrador the Naskapi Indians still live much as their ancestors did long ago. Most of their meat comes from the caribou, or wild reindeer. Naskapi boys cut and bend bits of wood to make toy caribou. When they play hunting, they shoot at these with small crossbows. This kind of bow is fastened on a crosspiece, the stock. In shooting, the bow is held level, with the arrow resting on the stock. Bows of this kind were formerly used by soldiers of Asia and Europe, and the Naskapi learned from Europeans to make and use them.

Labrador is a cold country, with a great deal of snow in winter. The Naskapi use snowshoes, which were invented by Indians, but recently Naskapi boys have learned to make and use skis as well.

On the Northwest coast of North America live the Tlingit, a tribe of Indians whose homes are wooden houses with wonderfully carved totem poles in front of them. In the long winter evenings, these Indians dance strange dances, in which they act out wonderful old stories of animals, people, and gods. They dress in curious costumes and wear strangely carved and painted wooden masks as they dance. Tlingit children have small carved and painted masks with which to play.

The Hopi, who live in pueblos in Arizona, also have dances for the spirits or gods in whom they believe, and wear special costumes and masks for the dances. Hopi fathers make, for their little girls, curious dolls that look like the dancers with their masks. These are called katcina dolls, or tihus.

Indian girls have always liked to play with dolls. Often these were merely pieces of wood wrapped in buckskin. Iroquois Indian girls made fine dolls of folded corn husks. Dakota mothers often made beautiful

dolls of soft buckskin stuffed with animal hair. These had arms and legs, bead or paint faces, and often real hair. Mothers and older sisters helped the girls to make dresses for their dolls, as well as cradles, toy clothes bags, and other tiny furnishings. Sometimes toy wigwams or tipis were made for doll houses.

Many Indian tops were made by the children themselves. Balls were of wood, or of carefully sewed buckskin stuffed with hair or scraps of hide. Boys of the plains tribes carved tops of wood and often used leather whips to spin them. A favorite game of that region was played with sticks of wood or bone, called "snow snakes," which were thrown over smooth snow or ice to see how far they would slide. Boys fastened buffalo ribs together to make sleds. These became very smooth from much usage, and would slide swiftly down a snowy hill, or down a grassy slope in summer. Indians of nearly all tribes often amused themselves with a bone tied to the middle of a cord. A stick was fastened at each end of the cord and the cord twisted. Then by pulling the sticks, the bone was made to spin and buzz in the air.

Indian children were taught by their parents to be gentle with each other, and always to play fair. Their games were nearly always out of doors, even in winter; so they had plenty of fresh air and sunshine, and learned not to mind the cold. If rain or snow spoiled their toys, they did not care, for they had the fun of making new ones.

JUNE WORK, Guide-lecturer

Note: Be sure to see the Iroquois corn husk dolls and the Naskapi toy caribou, crossbow, and skis in Hall 4, the Hopi tihus in Hall 7, and the little wooden masks and the dolls of Tlingit children in Hall 10. In Hall 5 are Dakota dolls and a toy tipi, a fine Kiowa doll with real hair and a painted face, a Cheyenne bone buzz, a beautiful doll's dress trimmed with shells, from the Crow tribe, and a little boy's bow and arrows, tops, a slingshot, toy horses of clay, balls and sticks for shinny and other ball games, "snow snakes," and a buffalo rib sled. In Hall 6 are toy cradles holding wooden dolls with bead eyes, from the Pomo tribe of California.

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It is free to adults on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

STEPHEN C. SIMMS, Director

# MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

*Presented by*

*The James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation*
*for Public School and Children's Lectures*

Series XVII, Number 2
October 3, 1931

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

## SEALS

Seals are strange animals to those people, who see them only in circuses juggling colored balls on their noses or in the zoos where they watch them swimming gracefully about in their tanks.

Eskimos and other peoples of cold countries, know a great deal about seals, as they spend much time in hunting them. From the skins of the seals they make clothing, bags, covers for kayaks and other useful articles. The meat and blubber they eat.

Seals are ocean animals, particularly of the colder parts. Their feet are paddle-like flippers, they have a thick coat of hair which protects them from the icy water and under the skin is a layer of fat, called "blubber" which helps to keep them warm.

On land hair seals are very clumsy, wriggling or "humping" along with their bodies almost flat on the ground. Once they slip into the water they can float on the surface, dive to the bottom or chase fish in the depths with great speed and skill, and they can remain under water for as much as twenty minutes at a time. Fish, squids and cuttle-fish are caught and eaten.

Seals like company and are usually found in large groups, called "herds". On bright days they like to sun themselves, lying with their heads toward the water. The heads and faces of seals look quite human. Probably many of the stories of mermaids and sea-nymphs are founded on tales of seals.

In the spring, seals gather at their rookeries. The males are called "bulls" and the females "cows". The bulls reach the rookeries first and each chooses a small area for his own. When the cows arrive, they are kept together and guarded on this ground by the bull. His group is called a "harem".

It is here the babies, called "pups" are born and tenderly cared for by the mothers. Each mother knows her own baby and when she returns from the sea, after a search for food, she has no trouble finding her own pup among hundreds of others. The youngsters do not like to go into deep water at first as they cannot swim, and have to be

taught by the adults. Once they learn, they spend a great deal of their time playing and frolicking in the water and along the shore.

Seals are divided into two groups, Eared Seals and True or Earless Seals. Eared Seals have long necks, small ears and hind flippers that can be turned forward to help them walk on land. They swim with their front flippers, the back flippers being used as rudders. To this group belong the Fur Seals and Sea Lions.

Fur Seals are also called Sea Bears. These are the seals whose skins are made into the handsome furs. The largest herd is found on Pribilof Island, near Alaska and is owned and protected by the United States Government. The young males only are killed for their fur.

Sea Lions are very large seals. The roar of the male and fold of skin on the neck, resembling a lion's mane, gives the name. They are hunted for the hides and oil obtained from their blubber. Sea Lions are used and trained to do tricks in circuses and zoos.

True or Earless Seals have no external ears, very short necks, hind flippers stretched backward and a coat of short bristly hair. In swimming the hind flippers are used.

The largest and strangest of all seals are the Elephant Seals or Sea Elephants. They are great clumsy beasts. They get their name from their snouts which somewhat resemble short trunks. The only herd found near the United States is on Guadalupe Island, southwest of California.

GORDON S. PEARSALL, Guide-lecturer

Note: In Hall N is shown a habitat group of Sea Lions; in Hall 19 may be seen skeletons of a Sea Lion, Sea Elephant and a Seal. In Hall 10 is an Eskimo family returning from a seal hunt, an Eskimo hunting the seal from his Kayak and several cases containing clothing and articles of sealskin, weapons and implements used in hunting seals and food bowls carved in the shape of seals.

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# MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

*Presented by*

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Series XVII, Number 3
October 10, 1931

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

# CORAL

When the word coral is used many people think of the coral stone or the jewelry that is made from it. And well they may for coral has had such a use since long before the Christian era. Even at an early time the Mediterranean coral was in great demand in India where it was believed to be endowed with mysterious properties. The Gauls also used it ornamentally on their helmets and war weapons. The ancient Romans hung coral trinkets around their children's necks to preserve them from danger, and also because of the medical virtue attributed to the coral. Throughout mediaeval time it was used as a charm, and in Italy at the present time some still wear coral charms as protection against the evil eye.

Most of the world's red coral, which is the most valuable variety, comes from the Mediterranean Sea and from Japan. The Algerian reefs are divided into ten zones, and each is fished but one year in ten. Black coral is used chiefly in India; it has a wide range although for a long time most of the supply came from the Persian Gulf.

Coral, some of which we so highly prize and some of which is valueless, is the product of an animal. The corals are divided into two groups: the reef-formers which are very small and which live together in sufficiently large numbers to form reefs, and the individual or cup corals each of which lives by itself. The cup corals are usually larger in size—they have no economic importance.

Most of the reef-formers live in water no deeper than two hundred and forty feet. Myriads of them live together in uncounted numbers. Most reproduce through budding—the bud developing inside the parent and then attaching itself alongside. Some, however, are reproduced through the form of eggs; the newly hatched young pass through a stage when they can swim around before they settle down and anchor themselves to one spot for the remainder of their lives. The coral animals are called polyps.

Reefs have been separated into three classes: fringing, barrier, and atolls. Fringing reefs are either close to the shore or right against it, whereas barrier reefs are usually some distance out in the water with lagoons lying behind them. The Great Barrier Reef of Australia is more than one thousand miles long and as much as eighty miles wide. Atolls are rather curious reefs in the shape of circles. The reefs grow up to the water's surface to produce a circular strip of land with water both inside and out. Where there are breaks through the reefs ships can, in

time of storm, slip through into quiet, protected waters, but woe to the ship that strikes a hidden reef—it will soon be broken into pieces by the waves.

The coral reefs become large only after countless millions of the tiny corals have lived and died. Each little polyp leaves behind a tiny skeleton, and masses of these skeletons form the reef. The name coral reef is a little incorrect, however, for other life, particularly the calcareous sea weeds, really produces more of the reef than do the corals.

Some types of coral may be fan-shaped, and some are horn-like in appearance, thus giving rise to the name staghorn corals. Likewise the brain corals resemble human brains to a remarkable extent. Organ-pipe, chain, honeycomb, star, lettuce, rose, and tree corals all derive their names from a resemblance to well-known objects.

Most corals are not able to live in water colder than 68°, so to find living corals we must journey to tropical seas. Furthermore, geologists believe that corals have always been limited to tropical waters, and if that is true you are in for a big surprise, because fossil corals (the remains of those that lived long ago) are found much farther north than the present tropics. Right here under Chicago we can find fossil corals in the limestone rock, and some have been found as far north as Greenland and Alaska. It does seem strange that Alaska and Greenland once had climates like that of southern Florida and the West Indies, does it not?

Just as the earth has experienced warmer climates in the past, so has it passed through colder ones. During the glacial periods the earth was colder than now, so that even some of the tropical seas became too cool for corals. When the earth warmed up they spread out until all the tropical waters were again populated.

FRANKLIN C. POTTER, Guide-lecturer

Note: At the present time the coral exhibits are limited to a few in Stanley Field Hall and fossil corals in Hall 38. When the new Hall of Marine Invertebrates is opened, there will be many more on display. In the jewel room you will find jewelry of coral and coral charms from Italy and Algeria.

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, Director

# MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

*Presented by*

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Series XVII, Number 4
October 17, 1931

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

## THE SACRED BEETLE OF EGYPT

A long time ago, people in Egypt noticed the queer behavior of certain beetles. Two of these dark green insects, each about an inch long, frequently were seen rolling a dusty ball much larger than themselves. They turned their backs to it, pushed with their hind legs, and often even stood on their heads in the labor of rolling it along. When they had found a place that satisfied them, they dug a hole and buried the ball.

This hard work was not just for fun. The careful father and mother, who had hidden their egg in a great ball of food such as baby scarabs might eat, buried the ball in a safe place. When the egg hatched, the tiny grub found itself surrounded by food. It ate and grew for about four weeks, then curled up and slept for a while. Later it awakened and crawled out of the ground, no longer a fat grub, but a full-grown scarab beetle.

When the ancient Egyptians saw these beetles rolling their ball, they thought, "Khepri, the sun god, must work like that when he rolls the sun up the sky." Sometimes they saw a young beetle come out of the ground, where a ball had been buried, and then fly away. They hoped that after their deaths their own souls might come out of their buried bodies and fly away to the happy country where they believed the sun god went after he disappeared each night. They believed that scarabs were sacred to the sun god and thus had magic power.

The earliest Egyptians sometimes placed jars of scarabs in graves, hoping that their power would help the dead people to come to life. In later years, imitation beetles of stone, pottery, or metal, often with prayers written on them, were buried with the dead.

Since the Egyptians believed that their souls would have a long, dangerous journey to the future world, they tried in every possible way to win help from the gods. Many amulets, or luck pieces, were fastened into the wrappings of a mummy, or preserved body, before it was laid in its coffin. Scarab amulets were laid over the heart, that it might beat again, and over the eyes, that they might open and see. Even after reaching the happy country of the sun, no one could enter it until the gods had judged him and found him good. It was believed that if

a man had done wrong, his heart might speak to the gods and tell them about it. Often a stone scarab was laid on a mummy's breast. On it was written a prayer something like this: "O my heart, my own heart, in the day of judgment do not bear witness against me. Speak not lies against me before the great god."

Scarabs were thought to bring luck to the living as well as to the dead. Beads were made in scarab form, often of precious stones, and rings were made with scarab settings. Prayers to the gods were written on the flat under sides of scarabs. These sometimes had tiny human faces in place of beetle heads. More than three thousand years ago, King Amenhotep III had many scarabs made with inscriptions telling of his wedding. A few years later another set was made, telling how the king had killed one hundred and two fierce lions in ten years.

For a long time it was the fashion in Egypt to make seals in scarab form. These were often worn in rings, fastened in such a way that either the flat seal side or the scarab back could be turned outward.

Cousins of the sacred beetle of Egypt live in our own country. One is the brown "June bug" or May beetle which knocks on our windows in spring evenings. Another is the "tumble-bug" which rolls its ball in our fields and pastures just as its famous cousin has been doing in Egypt for thousands of years.

JUNE WORK, Guide-lecturer

Note: In H. N. Higinbotham Hall of Field Museum are shown several rings with movable scarab seals. In Hall J are displayed scarab rings of blue-glazed pottery, scarab amulets, some of them perforated for attachment to mummy wrappings, and a heart scarab from the mummy of Lady Isimkheb, who lived three thousand years ago. The last-named is provided with a label which gives a translation of the prayer written on it. The coffin of Lady Fio is decorated with four pictures of the sun god, Khepri, in the form of a scarab, rolling the great ball of the sun.

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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

# THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

There is a small peninsula of land stretching southward from Manchuria in Asia. This land, formerly known as Korea, is now called "Chosen." The name "Chosen" means "The Land of the Morning Calm."

While Chosen is a comparatively new name for this land adopted by the Japanese, the country is old. The civilization extends back at least 3,000 years. Today some of the larger cities and their people are adopting modern ways. However, away from the larger cities and back in the hills, the people are practically the same as those secretive people who lived there many years ago.

The greater part of Korea is hilly country. An American visiting there was asked, "Do the mountains sit as close together in your honorable country?" Some of the mountains are beautiful, covered with trees and a few streams. The people are very fond and appreciative of beautiful scenery and flowers. They will walk miles just to look at some lovely view. In parts of Korea where the people are poor, most of the trees have been cut for fuel. These parts look barren and cold.

The average Korean house in the country is made of mud-plastered stone walls with a low, thatched roof of rice straw. The house is built in the shape of a half square, thus making a partially enclosed court. The doors are more like windows than doors. There are no chairs since the people squat on the floor.

A Korean gentleman, that is one who does very little manual work, usually wears a pair of baggy, white trousers, padded waist covered with a green silk waistcoat and over all a long, thin coat that ties with a bow on the side. From his belt hang numerous useful articles: a small knife, a pair of chopsticks, a pair of smoked spectacles and bags for money and tobacco. He wears sandals on his feet. His hair is braided into a long cue which is coiled into a tight knot on top of his head. His hat is called a "pill box hat" because of its stiff and unusual shape. The crown of the hat is woven of horsehair and is so thin that you can see the man's head through the hat. The brim is sometimes of horsehair and sometimes of bamboo. This hat is a very important part of his costume. During a rain, each man covers his hat with an oiled paper rain-hat which folds up when not in use and can be thrust into his belt. The rain-hat when in use, resembles very much a lamp shade. A straw raincoat is sometimes used. This is usually worn by poorer people, while the wealthy people wear clothes of finer materials; their hats often cost as much as twenty dollars.

A Korean woman of the middle class wears a long coat over her head when walking in public. The coat may be white, green or red.

The boys and girls when quite young, play many games. These are usually games such as blind man's buff where no toys are needed. Korean children have few toys.

The children's festival comes once a year on April 8. For this day toys are bought for the children, such as tops, kites and images of birds and animals. Little girls make their own dolls from bamboo, using soft grass for the hair which is braided into cues. They dress the dolls in clothes similar to their own dresses. At the age of four or five the children start to school and are supposed to busy themselves from then on with school work. The most important work of a girl is sewing; she is also nurse-maid for the younger children. Even though she is the daughter of a wealthy man she must know how to sew and how to direct her own house in the future.

A child does not receive a name until it is one year old. The name given then is just a childhood name. A boy keeps his name until he is fifteen years old. A girl keeps her name until she is married. In Korea a boy is a boy until he is married whether that takes place at fifteen years of age or fifty. He is not allowed to coil his cue on top of his head until he is married.

The food in Korea is usually served on small, low tables. Brass bowls, cups and chopsticks are used. Fish of any kind is an important food, and a great amount of rice is eaten. Koreans are fond of cucumbers sliced, salted or made into soup. Beans are easily kept so when all other food is scarce, beans, rice and water make a meal.

A visit to the small country of Korea, which is now a part of Japan, would indeed be an interesting one filled with pleasant surprises and strange experiences.

MIRIAM WOOD, Guide-lecturer

Note: In Hall E you may see the splendid costumes of the former Korean court, their chopsticks, pipes, fans, drums, boxes, guns and many other things used by them.

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, Director

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*Presented by*

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Series XVII, Number 6
October 31, 1931

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

# THE ANTEATERS

The name "anteater" in itself is enough to tell you some things about these strange creatures that live in the tropics. As you can easily guess, they feed almost entirely upon ants, termites and other insects. Each anteater has a long ribbon-like tongue with which he sweeps up the swarming ants; as this tongue is covered with a sticky substance, the ants have no chance of escape. No true anteater has teeth; they are not needed.

Anteaters are found in South America, Africa, Australia and Asia. The largest one is found in South America and is called the "Great Anteater." It is sometimes six feet long. The tail is two feet in length and is covered with long, coarse, blackish-gray hairs. Some people say the tail keeps the insects from bothering the anteater but perhaps the most noticeable use is as a blanket while sleeping. The tail not only keeps the body at the right temperature at this time but also hides the animal from view.

The head of the anteater is drawn out into a long, narrow, tube-like snout. The eyes and ears are very small and the mouth is a little opening just large enough for the narrow tongue to flash in and out. Sometimes that tongue goes out about two feet. The anteater tears open the ant hills with the curved claws on his front feet. These claws are very long, sharp, and turn under. Thus with the front paws turned under and the back paws flat, walking is quite slow and difficult. The greatest speed it can attain is a sort of shuffling run that any boy can overtake.

The Great Anteater sleeps in the daytime curled up in a ball in some tall grass. It does not have a burrow or home but sleeps in about the same place each day. The hunters track the anteater to his sleeping place in the early morning while the grass is wet with dew and the tracks are still visible. The anteaters are usually killed with spears. The meat is stewed or roasted and tastes something like goose meat.

Only one baby anteater is born a year. This youngster rides on his mother's back until quite large and then he stays with her until he is about a year and a half old.

As a rule the Great Anteater is not a fighter, but cornered he is just as fierce as a jaguar. The enormous claws can easily tear a dog to pieces. Sometimes the anteater sits up on his hind legs and just hugs his prey. Thus the Great Anteater is respected by both animals and men.

The Lesser Anteater, or Tamandua, from South America is smaller; its tail is not bushy but is slender and is often used as another foot, just as a monkey uses his tail. This anteater spends much of its time in a tree swinging and hanging there except when looking for a nest of ants.

A very small anteater is the Two-toed or Silky Anteater from the hottest parts of South America. It is about the size of a rat and hangs in a tree by its tail most of the time. As the name suggests, the hair is very silky and soft with a yellowish color. The natives call this little fellow "Kissing Hand" because it seldom eats anything in captivity, and spends the time licking its paws like a bear.

The Scaly Anteater is also known as the Pangolin and is found only in the old world—in Africa and Asia. It looks something like an armadillo with overlapping, horny scales on the back and tail. If disturbed when walking, this anteater quickly puts its head between its front legs, turns a somersault and rolls up into a tight ball of armor, making a hissing sound. The animal is then perfectly safe from all enemies. Sometimes this old world pangolin or anteater climbs trees and hangs there with the help of its powerful tail, but all pangolins do not climb trees.

A solitary baby is born in an underground burrow once a year. One burrow was found with a father, mother and baby pangolin. The baby was clinging to the mother's back. When removed, it immediately climbed back again. This youngster did not seem to recognize its father, but did know its mother, even from a distance of three feet and would go to her as fast as possible.

Thus the anteaters vary widely in their habits and appearances. However, they always live in the tropics and perhaps most interesting of all, they have no teeth.

MIRIAM WOOD, Guide-lecturer

Note: In Hall 16 you will find a Great Anteater case in which the anteaters are shown tearing apart an ant hill. In Hall 15 you may see a Silky Anteater, a Tamandua, a Yellow Anteater and two Pangolins.

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, Director

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*Presented by*

*The James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation*
*for Public School and Children's Lectures*

Series XVII, Number 7
November 7, 1931

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

In some of the fairy-tales we read of gnomes who were forever bringing queer, dark rock masses up through mysterious holes in the ground, and setting dragons to watch them by day and by night.

Perhaps, the gnomes were wise and knew that little cavities in those rocks were filled with brilliantly-colored, shining mineral crystals. It is in such cavities that many of our precious gems, such as sapphires, rubies and emeralds are usually formed.

If the mineral crystals are clear and hard and have color, they are valuable as gems; if they are cloudy and dull in color they may be useful in industry. For instance, sapphire of muddy appearance may be ground up and made into wheels for the machine-shop, for the sapphire is next to the diamond in hardness and the diamond is the hardest thing known.

When sapphire crystals are white, yellow or corn-flower blue they are known as "precious or noble sapphire." Kings and queens have worn the sparkling blue sapphires in their crowns and necklaces from earliest times. Not only did they admire the velvety gems, but often they believed that he who wore a sapphire would be protected from poisoning, and in time would become good, pious, devout and wise.

A sister gem to the sapphire is the ruby. Both stones are formed of aluminum and oxygen. They can neither be burned nor destroyed by acids. Rubies of a deep red color are among the most valuable of all gems, and among the rarest. A richly colored ruby is considered more valuable than most diamonds having the same weight.

Gems are sold by the carat. Each carat equals one twenty-fourth of an ounce troy. Good rubies may be worth from $2,000 to $3,000 a carat, hence even small ones are very costly. Few large perfect rubies weighing over ten carats are known.

In Burma, the chief source of rubies, rulers were formerly addressed as "Lord of the Rubies" on certain occasions, and all rubies over a certain size were sent to the king, directly from the mines. A crystal of exceptional size and beauty was accompanied by a procession of elephants, soldiers and nobles.

Many stories of the Orient are based on the powers of rubies. The Greeks and Romans thought that the ruby gave out light in darkness, and that when worn as a good-luck piece it kept away plague, poison and evil spirits.

Emeralds belong to the mineral species known as beryl. The crystals are usually six-sided prisms. Those of some varieties of beryl grow to

enormous sizes. Emerald crystals are often so brittle when first taken from the cavities that they must be gradually warmed before coming in contact with sudden heat. Diamonds throw back the light again and again and sparkle with radiance, but the emerald, like sapphires and rubies, depends mostly on its rich body color for its beauty.

Emeralds too are of very old usage. The Egyptians placed them on mummies, the Incas and Aztecs used them as decorations and offerings to their gods. The finest emeralds in the world are in Colombia, not far from the land of the Incas. Many of the ancient peoples believed that the emerald could cure diseases of the eye, and as late as the 17th century powdered emeralds were used in a drug for the cure of fever and snake-bite.

The best-known and the most popular of all precious gems is the diamond. The name comes from a Greek word meaning "unconquerable." Not only is it the hardest of minerals, but it cuts glass, which no other mineral will do.

Diamonds are pure carbon, and in color may be white, yellow, green, blue, red and black. One variety of black diamond is known as "carbonado." On account of their toughness, carbonadoes are useful for the cutting of hard rocks. Friction makes diamonds capable of picking up pieces of paper. This pulling power usually does not last more than thirty minutes. Many diamonds when rubbed also give off a light visible in the dark. Is it any wonder the peoples of long ago thought this gem to have weird powers?

These magnificent gems are found in India, Africa, Australia, South and North America. The African mines are of greatest importance at present. The most famous diamonds have come from India. The best known are the Kohinoor, now in the royal crown of Great Britain, and the Hope diamond, a deep blue stone without a flaw. The latter is worth over one hundred thousand dollars. The noted "Regent" was found by a slave who cut his leg that he might hide the crystal in the bandage and escape to a free land. Many diamonds have fascinating histories.

From the dark, uninteresting rock masses have come the crystals from which the gems of such beauty and usefulness have been made by the gem-cutter.

MARGARET M. CORNELL, Guide-lecturer

Note: Hall 36 has a case showing diamond crystals in the rock, and the H. N. Higinbotham Hall has numerous sapphires, rubies, emeralds and diamonds in the rough, as separate gems, and in jewelry.

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, Director

# MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

*Presented by*

*The James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures*

Series XVII, Number 8
November 14, 1931

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

# BANANAS

One of our most popular fruits is the banana. Bananas are common and inexpensive with us, now, but they were not always so, nor are they now for people living north, far away from where they grow.

Bananas were probably first found growing wild in Asia. They were known as "fruit of the wise men." The wise men are supposed to have rested under large banana plants and to have refreshed themselves with the fruit.

The plants grow from underground stems which have eyes similar to those of Irish potatoes. Pieces of this stem can be carried for miles and planted. Thus bananas spread into many countries having tropical climates.

Many are raised in South and Central America. There, the natives depend upon them as an important part of their food. The ripe fruit spoils easily, and in early days could not be taken far from the place of growth. A few were shipped occasionally to northern lands. Such were apt to be over-ripe before they arrived at their destinations. Those that were still good upon their arrival were carefully wrapped in tissue paper and sold at enormous prices. In those days bananas were a luxury indeed.

Only in recent years have bananas been shipped successfully to the north and to Europe. Now they are picked while green, carefully handled and shipped on cooled steamers, that carry as many as 60,000 bunches, to all parts of the world. The bananas are ripened after they reach their destination.

Most of the bananas we use are grown in Central and northern South America on large plantations. Plenty of rain and lots of sunshine make the plants grow rapidly, so that by the end of fifteen months they are full-grown. Each stem has one enormous bunch of bananas. The flower-bud at the tip never matures into bananas but withers away. Bananas do not grow downward on the stem but point straight upward. Thus when you see a bunch of bananas pointing downward in the store, they are upside down. One plant may have several stalks, each carrying a single bunch of fruit. The bunch usually weighs about sixty pounds and has about eighty bananas on it. As a stalk could never produce more than the one bunch, it is cut down

as soon as the bunch of fruit is removed. Another shoot springs up immediately from the old root.

Perhaps, you will be surprised to learn that there are about seventy different kinds of bananas. All of them are not edible, however. The one that you buy is called "Gros Michel," or more commonly "Big Mike." If these bananas were allowed to ripen on the plant, the fruit would be eaten by birds, raccoons, ants and other members of the animal family; thus, even the natives cut the bananas before they are ripe.

Some kinds of bananas have just pods filled with seeds as hard as bone, and so are of no value as food. A few bananas are good only when cooked, because when raw they are flavorless and not sweet. One kind of cooking banana grows to be about a foot long and three inches thick. Sometimes, the natives slice these big bananas and fry the slices; again, they boil the bananas whole.

One very delicate variety of banana that grows in the Canary Islands and in tropical America is called "the lady finger." It is only about four inches long, has a soft pulp, exquisite taste and very thin skin. Because of the skin, it can not possibly be shipped to us. In the Malay Archipelago is found a delicious banana called "Mensaria Rumph." The pulp of this is soft and sweetly scented, as if with rose water.

Some people make banana flour by drying and then grinding green bananas. Ripe bananas are sometimes preserved by sprinkling with sugar and drying in the sun. These are called "banana figs" and are sold as sweetmeats. In the East Indies, certain banana flowers are considered a delicacy and are cooked in curries.

Banana plants serve man in many ways. Coarse leaves are cut into strips and woven into mats, bags and cloth, or used for paper, or as covering to shelters. The fiber of some kinds may be used for making clothing.

MIRIAM WOOD, Guide-lecturer

Note: Hall 29 has a banana plant. Halls 28 and H show various products.

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, Director

# MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

*Presented by*

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Series XVII, Number 9
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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

# SLOTHS

The famous French naturalist Buffon selected sloths as the very type of imperfection in nature when he said, "One more defect and they could not have existed." When talking about sloths we should remember that there are two kinds: the ai or tordo having three toes on each fore foot, and the unau or two-toed form. Both inhabit the forested lowlands of tropical America.

The more backward and clumsy are the three-toed sloths which may be fairly common although difficult to discover. For one thing they are sort of camouflaged. Except for the three orange-colored patches on the males, one around each ear and a third in the middle of the back, both sexes are a grayish color. This protective color is aided by the growth of a green algae on the hair of the animals. When rolled up in a ball asleep the coloring is so deceptive that the animals may be mistaken for plant parasites, ants' nests—anything but animals.

One of the most curious features of a sloth is its method of locomotion. When moving around the creature is sometimes actually hanging upside down from the branches. On the ground it is almost helpless, although it can creep slowly and painfully to the nearest tree. Curiously enough the sloth is a good swimmer, so during the early part of the wet season when migrations take place a view of one in the water is not unusual. During the remainder of the year each remains in a rather small area entirely alone except during a very brief mating period.

Almost every sloth story tells us that the animal sleeps upside down as well as walking in that fashion. More recent studies, however, tell us that the three-toed sloth sleeps in a sitting posture on a branch. The legs encircle the trunk while the head is curled down on the breast so as to be entirely out of view. The short, stubby tail is remarkably strong and flexible; it is used as a prop, and also to sit on when sleeping.

When danger threatens the sloth may try to bite or claw, or it may curl up into a ball and remain quiet. It can neither fight well nor run away. Some are killed by bird, snake, and mammal enemies, but many escape. The color of the animal seems to be its best protection; also its double coat of thick hair and very tough skin. In addition, it is able to recover from wounds that would kill most animals.

Food consists entirely of vegetation and almost exclusively of the leaves, buds, and shoots of the cecropia palm. The sloths have never been seen to drink. Their lives are spent in leisure and speed is unknown even when danger is at hand. Sloths seem to have no intelligence what-

soever, and even their senses are poorly developed. Sight is so poor that a mother fails to see her young only a few feet away; hearing is worse, although for short distances they can distinguish their own peculiarly tuned cries. The other senses are poorly developed also, even smell which is the best of all. Since the three-toed sloth will not adapt itself to a strange diet, it is unsuited for captivity in northern countries.

The unau or two-toed sloth has a much better all around development. Perhaps the thinner coat of hair is responsible for this, because with a poorer protection the animal would have to be quicker and more alert, otherwise it would soon be killed off. Instead of half clinging, half sliding down a tree feet first, the two-toed sloth is able to descend head first.

On the ground the two-toed ones can actually walk upright if there is short grass to clutch. Another difference is that this variety is absolutely tailless. When eating they can pull the leaves from the tree and hold them in their claws, whereas the three-toed sloths eat directly from the tree.

Almost all known animals have seven vertebrae in the neck. The sloths are exceptions, however, the three-toed having nine such bones, and the two-toed possessing six.

Some of the extinct ancestors of the sloths were enormous creatures. The gigantic Megatheria or ground sloths attained a size almost as great as that of modern elephants. In addition to feeding on leaves and shoots they utilized their long front claws in digging roots for food. These giants originated in South America, but before dying out they had reached North America also. Some of them lived so recently that in a Patagonian cave, in addition to a skull, some of the actual skin was discovered. In fact, a British expedition set out to discover if any of them were still alive.

So although gigantic sloths have lived in the past, only the small sloths are in existence now.

FRANKLIN C. POTTER, Guide-lecturer

Note: In Hall 15 one of the cases contains three mounted sloths, and in Hall 38 the fossil forms may be seen.

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, Director

# MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

*Presented by*

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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

# CHILDREN OF THE SUN

High in the Andes Mountains of South America, in the land known as Peru, once lived a race of Indians whose rulers were known as Incas or "lords." The Incas called themselves "Children of the Sun," and explained the name by telling a story.

Long ago, they said, the people of Peru were poor and ignorant. The Sun was sorry for them, and sent his children to teach them better ways of living. Manco Capac and his sister Mama Occlo, who was also his wife, came from the mountain of the dawn, or, as some told it, from the sacred island of Lake Titicaca. A staff of gold was given to them, and they were told that it would show them where to make their home. They traveled northward until they came to a beautiful valley surrounded by high and snowy mountain peaks. Here the golden staff sank into the ground. The brother and sister settled in the valley and began teaching the people who were living there to worship the Sun. Manco Capac taught the men to hunt, to catch fish, and to cultivate the earth. The people became farmers, raising corn, potatoes, peanuts, beans, and other food crops, also cotton. They tamed and trained the llama to carry burdens for them. Mama Occlo taught the women to spin and to weave cotton and the wool of llamas and alpacas into beautiful cloth. In time the city of Cuzco grew up, and Manco Capac became the first Inca—the ancestor of the Children of the Sun.

Many tribes of Indians lived among the mountains and along the seacoast to the north, west, and south of Cuzco. Some of these people were farmers, and some were fishermen. Some made tools and ornaments of copper and bronze, and jewelry of gold and silver. The women wove brightly-colored, tapestry-like cloth, and modeled graceful pottery. Some of them painted pictures on their dishes; others made jars in the shapes of people, animals, and vegetables. By studying these, we can learn how those people dressed, what musical instruments they played, what animals they knew, and what plants grew in their gardens.

In time the Incas became the rulers of the surrounding peoples, and Cuzco the capital of an empire which included the lands we call Ecuador and Bolivia as well as Peru, and reached south even into Argentina and Chile. The distant parts of the empire were connected by roads which in many places were fifteen feet wide, level, and paved with stone. In the mountains the way sometimes had to be cut through solid rock, with steps in the steepest places. Over deep river valleys were swinging bridges of stout cables made of twisted vines.

Everything in his empire belonged to the Inca ruler. He owned the land and the crops grown on it, the mines and all metals, the herds of llamas and alpacas and their meat and wool. He arranged to have all things distributed among the people as they were needed. Every person, who was able, had work to do. Each year all the good land was divided among the farmers that they might raise the crops needed for the whole country. They were allowed to keep a certain part of what they had raised for themselves. Part of the remainder was used by the Inca and his officers; part went to the priests who cared for the temples and took charge of ceremonies in honor of the Sun and other gods of the Peruvians, and part was given to orphan children and to those who were sick or too old to work. Wool and cotton were given out each year to the women of each family. They made all the clothing that was needed.

Cuzco at that time was a splendid city. The palaces of the Inca ruler and his relatives and the temples of the Sun were large buildings of stone. Each year celebrations were held in the city. The most important was a magnificent festival in honor of the Sun, which was held in early summer. Indians from all over the empire traveled to Cuzco for this occasion. Before dawn, all the people, dressed in their gayest and most beautiful garments, watched for the coming of their great god and greeted him with songs and the music of flutes, pipes, and drums. A stone column was erected in the middle of a court. When the Sun was directly overhead, and no shadow was cast, the column was adorned with fragrant flowers and wreaths, and a seat placed on top of it. The people believed that at that time the Sun was seated on the column. Offerings of gold, silver, and precious stones were made to him. All day there were songs and dances. Often a story-teller recited the thrilling adventures of former Incas, while the people listened.

The conquest of Peru by Spanish soldiers, four hundred years ago, brought an end to the civilization and empire of the Incas. But among the mountains of Peru their descendants still live, and small boys herding llamas on mountain pastures still sing old songs in the language of the Children of the Sun.

JUNE WORK, Guide-lecturer

Note: In Hall 9 may be seen pottery, clothing, and ornaments from the empire of the Incas. In Hall 15 you will find llamas and an alpaca.

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, Director

# MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

*Presented by*

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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan
CHICAGO

# THE REINDEER

It is at Christmas time that our thoughts are most apt to turn to the reindeer and caribou, for then we see it associated in many ways with Santa Claus and his load of gifts. In Europe, where the reindeer are native as well as in America, Santa uses horses instead of reindeer. Caribou is a name given to a certain kind of reindeer.

The animals known as reindeer have been living upon the earth for a long, long time. Many of the cave homes of the early peoples, in Europe especially, show pictures of reindeer upon the walls, and pieces of bone and ivory have etchings of these animals. The latter are very natural in outline and position. From these we are sure that the animals were used by the cave dwellers. As it is an animal of cold lands only, the climate must have been much colder in Spain and France at that time, than it is today.

One of the first things noticed as one looks at a reindeer is the peculiar type of antlers. A shovel-like horn hangs over the face while two long branching horns rise upwards and backwards. Some people think that the flat antler is used by the animal in securing its food. The reindeer would not fare very well if he had to depend upon that to remove the snow from above his food. Few animals have feet better adapted to the kind of life led. When hungry the feet are used to scrape away the ice and snow to get the juicy moss and lichen growing beneath. During the summer this type of food is not good, so then the reindeer feed on tender roots, berries, grass and mushrooms.

Reindeer or caribou are to the people of the far north what the camels are to the peoples of the deserts. The skin furnishes material for clothing and covers for houses, the flesh gives them meat, the milk is good to drink and makes a most delicious cheese, the horns and bones are used for handles, spoons and other objects which we would make from wood or metal. In many parts of the Arctic region reindeer caravans are the freight trains, just as camels carry great loads across the deserts. A pair of reindeer pulling together can haul from 200 to 400 pounds at the rate of 35 miles a day and keep it up for some time. They are better than dogs during the long Arctic winter as they travel well in the dark. This the dogs cannot do. Reindeer can also be ridden, but until a person has become accustomed to the saddle used and knows how to swing with the reindeer's stride, there is not much pleasure in riding one.

The feet of the reindeer can spread out like snowshoes when walking on soft snow, or the muscles can be contracted and the hoofs and dew-

toes drawn together. In this position the legs are like stilts when needed for digging into ice or snow. The feet also have long, stiff bristles which grow downward at the back of the foot and curve up between the two parts making it possible for them to hang on where other animals would slip.

The coat of the reindeer is well-fitted to keep him warm in a cold land. It appears to be composed chiefly of coarse stiff hairs, but a close-up study of his coat shows next to the skin a covering of wiry wool. The outer hairs are barrel-shaped and when the animal is swimming air fills the spaces between the hairs. No other four-footed animal floats as high out of the water as the reindeer, and it takes a very fast canoe to overtake one in the water. The feet also render assistance when swimming.

If you were to take a ride behind a reindeer team would you hear the animals make much noise? Very little. In fact, the mother makes a grunting sound when she wants to call her calf to her or to let another reindeer know where she is, but otherwise she is very silent when being driven. The feet of a herd in motion produce a peculiar crackling sound.

Reindeer have a great deal of curiosity. They investigate all unknown sights. If alarmed they move the long hairs at the end of the body up and down and all animals in sight run to cover. They have poor eyesight, but a marvelous sense of smell. Unlike most animals the wind has an attraction for reindeer. They like to travel directly into the fierce winds of the northland.

In 1892 a small herd of reindeer was imported into Alaska. It was accompanied by several Lapp families. The latter came because the Eskimos knew nothing about caring for such animals. Since that time many herds have been established and very fine animals are being sent to the United States. The meat tastes much like beef and brings a good price; the skins are excellent for gloves and coats. So you can be proud of a jacket of reindeer. It is warm, good to look at and will last.

MARGARET M. CORNELL, Guide-lecturer

Note: In the Ernest Graham Hall is a case showing a Neanderthal family and a reindeer which the father killed with a stone weapon; Hall 13 has a caribou from Alaska, and Hall 19 shows the skeleton. Look especially at the feet.

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